

## Introduction to Special issue MEC

In this issue we are first publishing a series of papers written for a research seminar named The 2023 Media Education Conference (MEC 2023, [www.ulapland.fi/mec2023](http://www.ulapland.fi/mec2023)). The conference took place in Salla Wilderness Park, Sallatunturi, Finland in September 25–27, 2023. MEC is an informal and friendly conference that participants attend to exchange ideas and information dealing with media education, educational use of ICTs, and learning environments. MEC 2023 was organized by the Media Education Hub ([www.ulapland.fi/meh](http://www.ulapland.fi/meh)) at the University of Lapland. MEC is organized every second year and MEC 2023 was the tenth media education conference. The theme of MEC 2023 was “Media Education Meets Wilderness.” MEC 2023 participants were invited to submit paper proposals to be published in this special issue of [seminar.net](http://seminar.net).

The paper called “Media Literacy in times of crisis: First results of the YO-Media project handling the voice of educators, Teachers and Journalists” By **Alessandro Carenzio, Stefano Pasta and Simona Ferrari**, all from the Catholic University of Milan, addresses the matter of the current “infodemic” and how young people might navigate in a very uncertain media landscape. Based on interviews of students, teachers and journalists they present the first findings on how they can develop new ways of developing critical media literacy.

The paper “Playful Computation: teaching computing through playful learning” is written by **Surya Pasupuleti and Marjaana Kangas**. This paper investigates students’ experiences and teachers’ attitudes towards playful computation, which they describe as an innovative pedagogy that incorporates playful learning to teach students information and computing technology. They conducted the study at a Californian primary school during one summer. The study involved 84 students and 5 teachers engaging in a number of creative and playful computing and they collected data with a mixed-methods approach. They found students to be active and engaged, but also detected students who felt disconnected and remained unengaged.

The third paper was provided by **Mikko Vesisenaho and Teemu Valtonen** who also attended the conference, but submitted a different paper, with co-authors **Mari Kyllönen, Jari Kukkonen and Päivi Häkkinen**. They raise the pertinent question of how well teacher educators prepare their students for applying their digital skills to their future teaching careers in Finnish schools. The title “Teacher educators’ and pre-service teachers’ confidence toward the use of ICT in education: who are role models and who are co-learners?” The results show a certain division in both groups as to how they assess their knowledge and skills. Using the Technological Pedagogical Knowledge-framework they show that students and teacher educators should be considered co-learners and with flexible positions as to how they are role models for each other.

The remaining papers for this issue are provided independently of the conference in Salla, Finland.

Seminar.net has published a range of papers about teachers and their sense of stress related to the use of ICT. **Malte Cramer and Ingmar Hosenfeld** of The University of Kaiserslautern-Landau have in their paper called “Job demands and resources of information and technology use among teachers in Germany: A group concept mapping study» tried to elicit the opposite effects: positive effects and improvement of teachers sense of benefits from using ICT in schools. They relate the experiences of the teachers to health issues and find that more teachers have positive experiences with ICT than negative.

In the paper called “Decoding digital education notions and encoding critical thinking, human rights and participation for fairer digital societies” **Soledad Magnone** from Tampere University presents results from a comprehensive analysis of research papers on how digital education is described in terms of digital rights, critical thinking and participation.

**Jonas Asplin and Cecilia Segerby** of Kristianstad University present a paper called “University Teachers’ Relational Competence in Online Teaching: A Microscopic Relational Analysis”. They rightly address the question of how teacher-students relations are built in digital classrooms. Their research builds on Microscopic Relational Analysis (MRA) and shows that teachers need to have an advanced capacity for detecting cues and emotions in students when meeting them online